

# ROTOVUE

Serving Marine Corps Air Station New River and Jacksonville, N.C.

www.newriver.usmc.mil

March 8, 2006

Vol. 45 No. 5

## OIF Marines return



New River Marines return to awaiting friends and families

SEE PAGE 3

## NMCRS kicks off drive



Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society begins Station's annual fundraiser

SEE PAGE 4

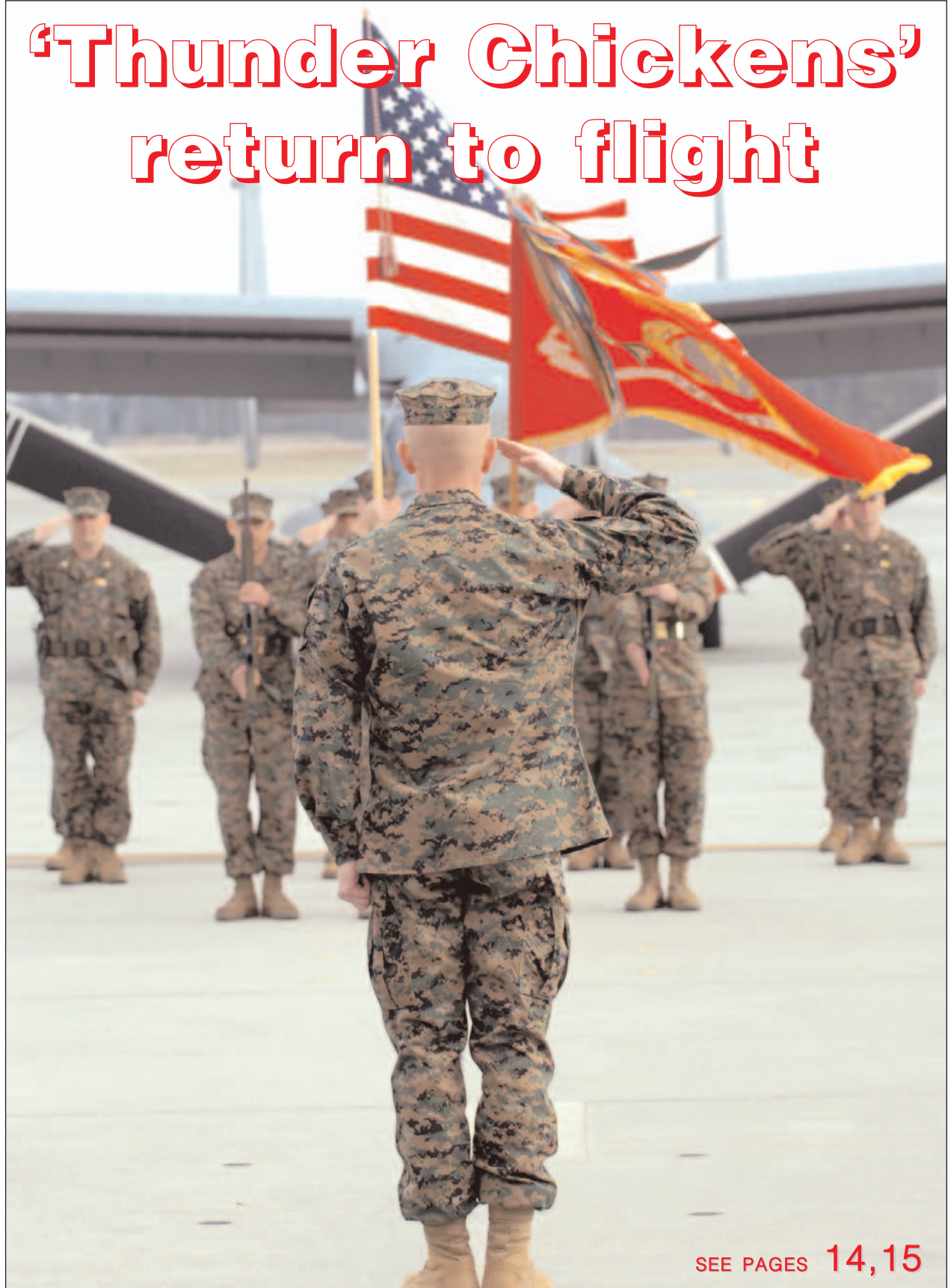
## Gone, not forgotten



Station Marines gather to honor fallen 'Condors' of HMH-464

SEE PAGE 6

## 'Thunder Chickens' return to flight



SEE PAGES 14,15

Command Message

The post office (military side) hours of operation are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Wednesday, official mail may be dropped off between 7:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. For more information concerning their hours of operation, contact Staff Sgt. Mohammed A. Eyiwuawi at 449-6501, 449-4431 or Mr. Ashford at 449-5476

The Motorcycle Safety Foundation Rider's Course has seats available for the next class, March 8 and 9. For more information call 449-5440 or 449-5437.

By order of the commanding officer, MCAS New River, the parking lot behind the Station Dining Facility is closed between the hours of 4 a.m. and 8 p.m., except to food service Marines and contracted civilian employees who work in the building.

There will be a Texas Hold 'Em Poker Night at the Staff Noncommissioned Officers' Club every third Friday of each month. The first cards will be dealt at 6:30 p.m. and play ends at midnight. There are 100 seats available and tickets cost \$20. Prizes are awarded to those who come in 1st through 5th place.

Community

The Wounded Warrior Spouses' Support Group meets every third Wednesday of each month. The meetings start at 6:30 p.m. at the Key Volunteer Center, Building H-14, and are open to all Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. and Marine Corps Air Station New River families. For more information, call Shannon Maxwell at 347-4450 or Becky Klepper at 353-4625.

The New River Tax Center is open to provide free tax service to military personnel until April 17. Visit Building AS-232 or call 449-7400 for more information. The Kinston 8000: A Run for the River race will take place March 26 at 8:30 a.m. Marines interested in running the race can call Tim Knobeloch at (252) 939-3336.

The Onslow Art Society invites all artists, 18 and older, to enter the 46th Annual Spring Art Show. For more information call 455-1441.

Education

The Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation is looking for students who qualify for academic year 2006-2007 scholarships. Scholarships range annually from \$500 to \$10,000. Students qualify if they are the son or daughter of a Marine on active duty or Reserve, son or daughter of a former Marine or Marine Reservist or son or daughter of an active duty, reserve or former U.S. Navy Corpsman who is serving or has served with the Marine Corps. Graduating high school seniors' application submissions are due by March 1. All other students are due by April 15. Application forms are available to download from www.mcsf.org.

In the Corps

Active Duty Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society Fund Drive kicked off March 1. Fund drive representatives have been trained and can assist you with donating. The team of representatives have undergone fund drive classes to ensure they build on last year's success. Donators can expect higher visibility and more opportunities to give this year with programs like

the "Round Up," as well as incentive-based donating. Those interested in donating, or who have questions about the drive, can contact Capt. Charles Hart at 449-5446.

The Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Company is looking for select Marines to join their organization. Those interested must be an unrestricted 1st term male, corporal or sergeant within one year of their EAS, must possess a GT score of 110 or higher, must be a volunteer, must be a U.S. citizen, must be at least 21 years old, and must display a command of the English language both orally and written. For more information contact Sgt. Brandal at (910) 451-8524.

Religious Info

The Weekly Men's Bible Study Group meets every Thursday morning at 6 a.m., at the Mainside Protestant Chapel Annex behind the Base Chapel. For more information, contact Chaplain James Dance at 451-3210, Maj. Jo Rozier at 451-7842, Staff Sgt. Stacey Lafferty at 450-8595 or Jim Sides at 451-5024.

Recruiting

Earn promotion points for recruiter's assistance in the Northeast Region. Recruiters assistants are needed at Recruiting Stations Albany, N.Y., Buffalo, N.Y., Harrisburg, Pa., New Jersey, New York, N.Y., Pittsburgh, Pa., Portsmouth, N.H., and Springfield, Mass. For more information, applicants are encouraged to please contact 1st MCD at (516) 288-5656. Marines interested in recruiters assistance in the Colorado, Wyoming, Western Nebraska or Western South Dakota areas should contact Sgt. Maj. Robert Cadle at cadlerg@marines.usmc.mil or call (303) 241-8102.



Civilian Spotlight



Gwen Eaton Fort Sill National Bank customer service representative and teller

Hometown: Hertford, N.C. Family: Gwen is married to Gunnery Sgt. James D. Eaton, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune 2d Marine Logistics Group Communication Electronics coordinator and equipment specialist, and together they have two daughters, Ashley, 5, and Kaitlyn, 4. Military background: Gwen has never served in the military. Time on Station: She said she has been on Station for approximately three months. Best part of job: Gwen said the best part of her job is being able to help young Marines with their banking needs. Best part of working with the military: "The best part of working with the military is being able to meet new Marines everyday," she said. "I also enjoy the respect the Marines have during their transactions." Proudest accomplishment: Gwen said her proudest accomplishment has been becoming a mother to her two daughters. Best advice received: "Live life to the fullest," said Gwen. What would you want your last words to be: "I would want to be able to tell my family that I love them," she said. Person whose lifestyle you'd like to emulate: "I like being me," she said. Personal hero: "My personal hero is my daddy," said Gwen. "He has always been there for me." Personal motto: "Live, love, laugh," she said. What is your favorite Winter Olympics event and why? "I like all the events," said Gwen. "Especially when the Americans win."



Commanding Officer Col. Stephen L. Forand

Public Affairs Officer Capt. Stuart J. Fugler

Executive Officer Lt. Col. Frank H. Miner

Public Affairs Chief Master Sgt. Phil Mehringer

Sergeant Major Sgt. Maj. Lewis Summerville

Press Chief Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Gale

Disclaimer

This Department of Defense newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the DoD. Contents of The RotoVue are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the DoD, or the Joint Public Affairs Office, Marine Corps Air Station New River. The RotoVue is published by Landmark Military Newspapers, a private firm in no way connected with the DoD, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Air Force, or the U.S. Marine Corps, under exclusive contract with

MCAS New River. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the DoD or military services, or Landmark Military Newspapers, of products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user, or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser

is confirmed, the publisher shall refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Joint Public Affairs Office. For information regarding content, contact Joint Public Affairs Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station New River, PSC. Box 21002, Jacksonville, NC 28545-1002. If you have comments or suggestions, contact the public affairs office at (910) 449-6196 or fax (910) 449-6478. For distribution and advertising inquiries, call (910) 347-9624.



# Station welcomes Marines, Sailors home from Iraq

## Welcome home HML/A-167, MALS-26



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Lance Cpl. Joseph Allen, Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-167, kisses his wife Zoe for the first time after returning from a seven-month deployment to Iraq. HML/A-167 and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron-26 deployed in support of OIF.

Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb  
correspondent

Marines and Sailors from Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-167 and Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron-26 returned from Iraq March 1. They were welcomed by their families at the HML/A-167 hangar.

According to Lt. Col. Lawrence E. Killmeier Jr., HML/A-167 commanding officer. A total of 264 Marines and Sailors returned: 219 from HML/A-167 and 45 from MALS-26.

Corporal Keith M. Estes, HML/A-167 airframes mechanic, said the camaraderie he experienced with his fellow Marines was greater than any he had ever experienced before.

"It was a bonding experience," Estes said. "It was awesome getting to know all these Marines on such a personal level."

The HML/A-167 rear detachment put together a "First Kiss" program in which family members could buy a raffle ticket.

The winner got to be the first to kiss their returning Marine or Sailor.

Ladonna L. Manis, winner of the "First Kiss" raffle and wife of Lance Cpl. Michael S. Manis, MALS-26 ordnance technician, said she thought it was a wonderful program and she couldn't be happier that she won.

Killmeier said he didn't feel like the deployment was over until he finally stepped onto the New River flightline.

"It's such a great feeling to see everybody out there and their smiling faces," he said. "I guess that's when it first hits you that you're home."

Killmeier said he believes the Marines of HML/A-167 did a phenomenal job in Iraq.

"These guys have flown a years worth of flight time in just over six months with half of the squadron's assets," he said.



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Sergeant Timothy Studebaker, Marine Wing Support Squadron-272 heavy equipment mechanic, kisses his wife Carla for the first time since departing for Iraq in August 2005.

## Welcome home MWSS-272

Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb  
correspondent

In the dark of the night while most were asleep, more than one hundred Marines, Sailors and families lined the parking lot of Marine Wing Support Squadron-272.

Signs, streamers and balloons were mixed with the smiling faces of the families of 75 Marines and Sailors returning home to see their loved ones for the first time since deploying in Aug. 2005.

Marines and Sailors from MWSS-272 returned from Iraq Feb. 25.

As the two buses carrying 75 men and women back to their families eased to a stop and the Marines and Sailors filed out, they were met with a series of near deafening screams.

"This is so great," said Sgt.

Ron C. Marshall, MWSS-272 firefighter, as he embraced his wife Niki for the first time in seven months. "It's like a honeymoon all over again."

"I'm just so happy to have him home," Niki added.

According to Staff Sgt. Tevis J. Mitchell, MWSS-272 family readiness staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, the families waited several hours to see their returning Marines and Sailors due to delays.

"Once they finally stepped off that bus, I think their families had a big feeling of relief to (finally see) their (loved ones) again," Mitchell said.

Sergeant Timothy Studebaker, MWSS-272 heavy equipment mechanic, said he has never felt as overwhelmed as the moment he stepped off the bus and saw the crowd of family members and fellow Marines cheering.

## Station welcomes HMM-266 home from Iraq



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Staff Sgt. Travis R. Hawley, Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-266 airframes staff non-commissioned officer-in-charge, holds his neighbor's daughter Jordyn Plane and his son Blake after stepping off the bus at the Marine Corps Family Team Building Center March 1. Hawley and ten other Marines from HMM-266 returned from a seven-month deployment in Iraq.

# NMCRS: A society that takes care of you

Lance Cpl. M. L. Meier  
correspondent

The Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society's annual fund drive began March 1.

At the official "kickoff meeting" Feb. 23 at the Station Theater, Col. Stephen L. Forand, Station commanding officer, along with NMCRS representatives, met with several Station Marines to discuss plans for this year's fund drive and how donating to the Society benefits active duty and retired Marines, Sailors and their families.

According to Capt. Charles N. Hart, Station deputy comptroller, last year the Station raised more than 30,000 dollars, but Hart said he believes New River Marines and Sailors can exceed that number this year through several new programs.

"This year the (Station) CO is going to look more at the number of donations than the dollar amount," explained Hart. "That's going to be something that's important to him when he's going over the reports."

"Round up" is a new program designed to help raise additional funds by placing cash lockboxes at all the Marine Corps Community Services counters. Patrons can throw the change they get from their purchases into the NMCRS lockboxes vice putting it in their pockets.

Incentive-based donating for time off is going to be more structured this year than in the past, said Hart.

"The idea was briefed to the major command sergeants major and senior enlisted and it has been blessed by the Station (executive office)," said Hart. "You must still get your unit comman-

der's approval to participate. This should motivate some to donate who may not otherwise."

Similar to a "buy out," Marines and Sailors who initiate a three dollar or more monthly allotment donation to the NMCRS may receive a half-day off. Those who donate five dollars or more in a monthly allotment may receive a full day off.

This year Hart, the Station NMCRS representative, is encouraging unit and shop fundraisers. Doughnut sales and car washes are among many ideas for fundraisers; however, individual shops are encouraged to come up with their own ways to support the fund drive.

A thermometer sign for each command is slated to be posted at the Air Station entrance today to show the percentage of Marines who have contributed to the Society from each command. The thermometers will measure the efforts of each unit as opposed to the dollar amount donated. The signs will show which command has the highest percentage of personnel donating.

Through lockboxes, incentive-based donating, unit fundraisers and the support of Station personnel, Hart and the



Lance Cpl. M. L. Meier

Colonel Stephen L. Forand, Station commanding officer, talks to Marines about his personal experiences with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society at its official "kickoff meeting" at the Station Theater Feb. 23.

NMCRS representatives expect this year's fund drive to be more successful than last.

For more information contact Capt. Hart at 449-5446 or e-mail at hartcn@newriver.usmc.mil.

## New River sees 'stars' MarForCom CG visits VMMT-204



Lance Cpl. Jonathan A. Tabb

Lieutenant Gen. Robert R. Blackman, commanding general, Marine Forces Command, asks Staff Sgt. Michael F. Stumpf questions about the course curriculum for the MV-22 Osprey crew chief students during his tour of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron-204 Feb. 23. During his visit, Blackman also discussed the future of the Osprey program and the steps Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron-204 is taking to qualify Marines to work on the MV-22 with Col. Joel P. Kane, VMMT-204 commanding officer. Before leaving, Blackman took time to visit many of the squadron's workstations and talk with the Marines in training and their instructors.



## CMC tours VMMT-204

General Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, walks down the New River flightline after taking a flight on an MV-22 Osprey. Hagee came to the Station to tour Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron-204. While on Station, Hagee flew the Osprey simulator and discussed the future of the aircraft. (photo by Lance Cpl. Samuel D. White)

## SecDef takes flight on Osprey



Lance Cpl. Samuel D. White

(Right) Col. Glenn M. Walters, Marine Tiltrotor Test and Evaluation Squadron-22 commanding officer, talks with Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, II Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, Joyce Rumsfeld, and Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense, about the capabilities of the MV-22 Osprey before taking a flight.

# Station Marines honor fallen brothers-in-arms

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Samuel D. White  
correspondent

A tranquil silence fell over the crowd of Marines, Airmen, Sailors and family members as they gazed upon photos of their loved ones at the Station Memorial Chapel. Sunlight beamed through stained glass windows and fell upon 10 crosses, adorned with helmets, dog tags and flight jackets as tears ran down the faces of lowered heads as they remembered what the Marines and Airmen gave in support of operations in the Horn of Africa and in support of their country.

On Friday, Feb. 17, eight New River Marines and two Airmen perished in a training mission off the coast of northern Djibouti and on Feb. 28, the 10 crewmembers were memorialized by an audience of hundreds.

“They gave everything they had for us, for each other, to complete their mission, to bring honor to themselves and our Corps and to carry out the (mission) of our great nation,” said Lt. Col. Jeffery P. Martinez, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-464 commanding officer. “I knew these men, I trained them, and I loved them like my own sons.”

The eight fallen Marines and two Airmen were assigned to a combined joint task force that conducts operations and training to assist host nations in establishing a secure environment to enable regional stability when their two CH-53E “Super Stallions” crashed into the sea, killing all but two of the crewmembers.

“They carried on their wings the dream of America; to bring help to those who needed it most,” said Martinez of his fellow “Condors.”

Though not all could view the ceremony from inside the chapel, Marines and families from the surrounding area watched the proceedings on televisions from tents posted just outside the Chapel and from the Station Theater located next door.

“(The ceremony) was important to the base and important for our community as well,” said Cmdr. Frederick A. Hilder, Marine Aircraft Group-29 chaplain. “This is a Marine town and what happens here at New River affects everybody; you all, your neighbors and even your business people.”

Affected most by the ceremony, though, were the families and fellow Marines of the fallen “Condors.”

“This (ceremony) is their chance to begin healing,” said Col. Christopher S. Owens, MAG-29 commanding officer, of the families

and Marines of HMH-464. “There is no closure, but at some point the sorrow turns to inspiration.”

An inspiration that will constantly be in the hearts and minds of the Marines of HMH-464 and lead the “Condors” through their next milestone, said Martinez.

“The loss of eight ‘Condors’ and their impact on the unit reminds us that the contributions of each Marine are vital to ensure that our

squadron is mission ready,” said Martinez. “Every time we strap into our aircraft, the memory of these men will be with us; their pride, their strength and the incredible experiences we shared.”

Those remembered were Capt. Bryan D. Willard, 1st Lt. Brandon R. Dronet, Sgt. James F. Fordyce, Sgt. Donnie Leo F. Levens, Sgt. Jonathan E. McColley, Cpl. Matthieu Marcellus, Lance Cpl. Samuel W. Large, Lance Cpl. Nicholas J. Sovie, Senior Airman Alecia S. Good and Staff Sgt. Luis M. Melendez Sanchez.



(Above) Major William C. Bentley, HMH-464 executive officer, delivers consoling remarks to the crowd gathered to memorialize the eight Marines and two Airmen who died Feb. 17. (Below) A set of flight equipment with the last name of each fallen Marine and Airman and photos rests at the front of the Station Chapel.



**Donate to  
the Navy-  
Marine  
Corps  
Relief  
Society!**

## Marine Corps Special Operations Command activated

**Sgt. Sara Wood**

American Forces Press Service

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. -- The Marine Corps officially joined the ranks of U.S. Special Operations Command in a ceremony that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld called an important milestone in the nation's fight against terrorism.

"It pairs two of history's most dedicated groups of warriors - the men and women of the U.S. Special Operations Command and the United States Marine Corps," Rumsfeld said at the activation ceremony.

Special operations forces and U.S. Marines are legendary for their agility, creativity and willingness to take on difficult missions, Rumsfeld said, and Marines have played important roles in past U.S. victories.

"Today in the Global War on Terror, we

call on Marines again ... to seek new and innovative ways to take the fight to the enemy," he said. "Our country needs agile, highly-mobile forces to track down terrorist cells that are dispersed across the globe."

The Marine Corps will bring new capabilities to Special Operations Command, Marine Gen. Michael W. Hagee, commandant of the Marine Corps, said.

Marine Special Operations Command will add new foreign military training units to the force, and the first of these teams will deploy in April, Hagee said.

The Marines will also increase the logistics capability of Special Operations Command, he added, and will provide maritime raid capabilities for the first time in history.

The war on terror is a long war that requires a flexible U.S. military force that is

able to face unconventional threats, Rumsfeld said. Special Operations Command has always been able to meet these unique threats, and the addition of the Marine Corps to the command gives it even more capability, he said.

"Our country will now have the benefit of being able to draw on some of the most dedicated, innovative and capable warriors our country has ever known," Rumsfeld said about the Marines.

Marine Special Operations Command is headquartered at Camp Lejeune and includes approximately 2,600 Marines and Sailors. The command has five supporting commands: the Foreign Military Training Unit, Marine Special Operations Battalions East and West, the Marine Special Operations Support Group, and the Marine Special Operations School.

## Advisory committee recommends changes to pay system

**Donna Miles**

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 28, 2006 -- A committee that's spent the past year studying the military compensation system is recommending sweeping changes that, if approved, would bring military compensation more on par with private-sector compensation.

The Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation released details of its recommendations today and is incorporating them in a final report expected to go to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld by late April, the committee chairman told the American Forces Press Service.

The proposed package includes two major ideas, retired Navy Adm. Donald Pilling, former vice chief of naval operations, explained. These include revamping the retirement system so servicemembers receive more pay throughout their careers rather than at their completion, and basing pay on performance rather than longevity and other factors, he said.

Pilling emphasized that any proposed changes to the compensation package would be grandfathered in, so currently serving members would not be affected. The only exception could be in the case that current members are offered the opportunity to voluntarily "opt in" to the new system, he said.

In terms of retirement, the committee recommends:

- Vesting members at 10 rather than 20 years.

- Paying graduated retirement plans ranging from 25 percent of base pay at 10 years to 100 percent of base pay at 40 years.

- Establishing a Thrift Savings Plan with government contributions of five to 10 percent of base pay.

- Providing "gate pays" at specific service milestones, as determined by the individual services.

- Delaying payment of the retirement annuity until age 60.

- In terms of pay for performance, the committee recommends:

- Revising the pay charts so pay is based on time in grade rather than years of service.

- Eliminating the "with dependents" and "without dependents" provision of basic allowance for housing so all servicemembers in the same pay grade receive the same allowance, regardless of their family situation.



# Former Marine scout/sniper to perform at Air Show

The 2006 Sounds of Freedom Air Show, slated for May 13 and 14, will feature aerial and troop demonstrations, and static displays. One such act will be Jim Leroy. With a routine full of signature maneuvers and heart stopping sur-

prises, Jim redefines the limits with explosive, non-stop action from start to finish. "People want to see low, wild, and seemingly out of control, but at the same time they want discipline, precision, and complete control"

says Jim. "You've got to take all of those elements and fuse them together in just the right way." Jim attacks the classic maneuvers with a "new-age" energy, adds the state of the art gyroscopic stunts, throws in some tricks of his own and combines it all into a mesmerizing display of aerodynamic dynamite that will leave even the most seasoned air show spectators shaking their heads in amazement. The recipient of the 2002 Art Scholl Showmanship Award and the 2003 Bill Barber Award for Showmanship, Jim is one of only eleven performers ever to receive both of these highly prestigious honors. His entertaining flying style coupled with his dynamic personality and tireless energy has made Jim

one of the most recognized performers in the history of the business. Jim is one of only a handful of full time "stunt pilots" in the world and actually makes his living by performing for air show audiences worldwide. Jim, a former Marine Corps scout/sniper, holds a bachelor's degree in Aeronautical/Aerospace engineering as well as an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) license. His list of pilot ratings includes single-engine, multi-engine, airplane instructor, helicopter, helicopter instructor, instrument instructor, and aerobat-

ic competency evaluator. Because of his dedication and commitment to excellence, Jim has established himself as one of the busiest and most sought after air show performers in the industry today. *Editors Note: Information and photos on Jim Leroy used from [www.bulldogairshows.com](http://www.bulldogairshows.com)*



Richard Vander Meulen



Richard Vander Meulen



# Trial by fire: ARFF Marines practice saving lives

Lance Cpl. Randall A. Clinton  
correspondent

Marines from the Station's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Section One battled fires on a training plane on the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C. flightline Feb. 22 as part of their monthly readiness training.

Eighteen Marines battled the controlled fires in teams of two.

One Marine focused the hose on the fire, while the other Marine acted as a safety, staying alert for any other danger.

Teamwork is important, said Gunnery

Sgt. Billy L. Chastain, ARFF Section One crash chief.

"These Marines are with each other more than their families, if you're not working together someone is going to get hurt," he explained.

The most important lesson learned at a training fire is safety, he added.

Safety, cut and dry, remains the top priority, Chastain explained.

If we don't work safely, we could end up in a bad situation, just like the crew we are trying to save, the Vickens, S.C., native said.

The method used by ARFF Marines differs systematically from other military

branches. While other branches use a "surround and drown" technique to extinguish the fire, the ARFF Marines know there is a more important goal, said Chastain.

"What we do different than the other services is we knock a hole in the fire to rescue the crew first; they're the priority, not the plane," he said.

According to Cpl. Mandi A. Neiswender, ARFF firefighter, as the Marines approached the fire-engulfed plane, they had to think back to the basics.

"It's really hot," the Dallas native added.

"You've got to remind yourself not to get tunnel vision, just keep your cool, but its really hot," she said.

They pushed through the fire and opened the hatch, making their way inside the burning plane.

While inside they fought the fire with water as it reignited in front and behind them.

After clearing the interior of the plane, they exited safely and finished the exercise by extinguishing fires on the outside of the aircraft.

According to Lance Cpl. Chris D. Williams, ARFF firefighter from Springville,



Lance Cpl. Randall A. Clinton

An ARFF Marine simulates rescuing the crew from a burning aircraft, as he pushes through the blaze and exits the training plane, on Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point's flightline, Feb. 22.

Ala., the Marines of ARFF don't mind the difficulty, the heat, or the stress of the fire. "It's hot, smoky, and lots of fire," said Williams. "I love it!"



Lance Cpl. Randall A. Clinton

Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Section One Marines push the fire back so they can enter the aircraft to safely and quickly search for injured crewmembers during a training exercise Feb. 22.

# II MEF support group helps local families

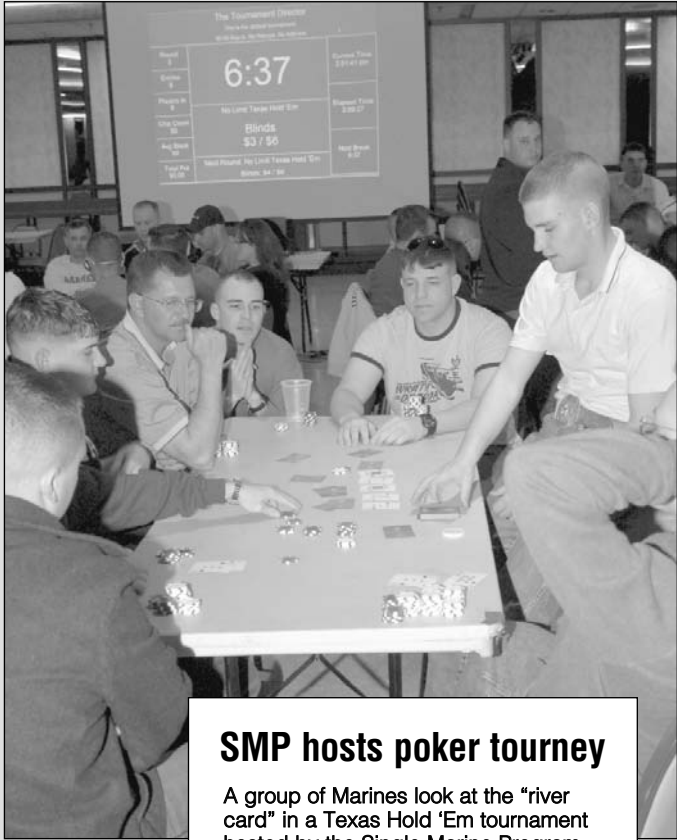
**Staff Sgt. A. C. Mink**  
II Marine Expeditionary Force

Returning from combat, labeled a “wounded warrior,” without question can be the beginning of a painful, difficult path. That path can be more easily navigated with help and Marines take care of their own.

During the healing process, the focus is on recovery and support for those individuals. However, they are not the only ones who face new challenges, and family members say

that they can begin to feel alone. Shannon Maxwell, Becky Klepper and Alison Sturla, wives of wounded warriors here at Camp Lejeune, recognized that other spouses like themselves might need the support of their own as they assist their family members in coping with physical and mental challenges caused by wounds of war. Meeting on the third Wednesday of each month, the Wounded Warrior Spouses' Support Group offers that assistance. In an open forum, spouses-

es, significant others and friends affected by a wounded Marine can find knowledge and strength in shared experiences with those who have walked a mile in their shoes. “Being able to share these things with someone and realizing that we were not alone in what we were going through was an enormous comfort - one that we hope to extend to others,” said Maxwell. For more information about the group, e-mail [wwsbg@hotmail.com](mailto:wwsbg@hotmail.com) or call 347-4450.



## SMP hosts poker tourney

A group of Marines look at the “river card” in a Texas Hold ‘Em tournament hosted by the Single Marine Program Feb. 25 at the Station Enlisted club. More than 130 Marines and civilians participated in the event. Prizes were awarded to first through 9th place. (photo by Lance Cpl. M. L. Meier)

## ROTOVIEW

*If you could go anywhere for spring break, where would it be?*



**“Spain, because I’ve been there before and it’s really beautiful.”**

**Staff Sgt. Rafael Iturrino, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, infantry unit leader, Brooklyn, N.Y.**



**“Somewhere in Europe, probably Italy.”**

**Lance Cpl. Jose Vidal, 8th Engineer Support Battalion, combat engineer, Newhall, Calif.**



**“It would have to be Georgia to go hunting and fishing.”**

**Gunnery Sgt. Mark Hardin, 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, Lima Co. platoon sergeant, Conyers, Ga.**

# ACE deploys Corps’ deadliest weapon

**Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Cosola**  
24th Marine Expeditionary Unit

NAVAL AIR STATION OCEANA, Va. -- “One minute!” squawks across the internal communication system of a CH-46E “Sea Knight” as Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-365 (Reinforced) crew chief Sgt. Jared E. Daly snaps a single finger in the air, indicating exactly how much longer terrorists have left to exist before a fleet of helicopters deploys its deadliest weapon – a Marine and his rifle.

Daly briefly illuminates a simple white sign reading “Objective” with a directional arrow and beneath that the words “no free rides” in the direction of the squad of Marines waiting to charge down the ramp and into the darkness.

The sign is one of the last and arguably most important elements of a successful helicopter raid – a technique HMM-365 (Rein.) executed March 1 as the Air Combat Element of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit during its Training in an Urban Environment Exercise in Norfolk, Va.

“Flying is not the hard part, it’s the planning and integration of the different parts – adapting and being flexible,” said Capt. Jess K.

Springfield, HMM-365 (Rein.) pilot training officer and raid pilot. “Nothing ever goes quite like you planned. You never know what might happen in a fluid environment. Your plan is only as good as the last round fired.”

The mission called for Marines from Alpha Company, Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment to raid a group of buildings aboard an outlying airfield in order to destroy a suspected weapons cache and gather any high value targets or intelligence in the area.

The ACE would support the Ground Combat Element with a contingent of 18 aircraft that included six CH-46E “Sea Knights” and two CH-53E “Super Stallions” as the assault element, two AH-1W “Super Cobras,” two UH-1N “Hueys,” two AV-8B “Harriers” and two F-18 “Hornets” as



Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Cosola

**Marines file into the back of a CH-46E “Sea Knight” from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-365 as they prepare for a raid exercise March 1. HMM-365 is the ACE of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit.**

close air support and a pair of KC-130’s to aid with communication and control.

“Integration is the key,” explained Springfield. “There are a lot of aircraft in a two-mile area all doing different missions. It’s important to plan how everyone fits into the overall scheme so that we’re not bumping into each other.”

For Sgt. Adam Brown, an Alpha Co., squad leader and raid participant, training with the ACE to perform raids is essential to ensuring that missions succeed during real-world operations.

“The more rides we get, the better,” said Brown. “The more raids we do, the more flights we go on, the better our decision-making skills will be at the end of the day. This is my fourth year in the Marine Corps and helicopter raids are ten times better than anything else we do because of the faster insertion into the zone. It’s all about speed and intensity.”

From mission planning and briefing to the

actual execution, the raid was done to simulate as closely as possible the way in which it would be done in theater. Marines utilized the Norfolk area to adapt to the challenges of flying in an urban environment including the number and variety of buildings and vehicles and the ambient cultural lighting that can play havoc with pilot and crew night vision gear, said Springfield.

“Adapting is what we do best, but it’s also the hardest part,” added Springfield. “But when everything goes right it’s a lot of fun. With Marines in the back, it’s the best part of flying.”

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-365 (Reinforced) is scheduled to deploy this spring to the European and Central Command theaters of operations as the Air Combat Element of the 24th MEU, which is composed of its Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; and MEU Service Support Group 24.



# VMM-263 ready to write next chapter in Osprey program



Marines, friends and families listen to Gen. Robert Magnus give a speech about the future of Marine aviation.



General Robert Magnus, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, talks about the capabilities of the MV-22 Osprey.



The 2d Marine Aircraft Wing band plays for the crowd at the stand up of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron-263.



Sergeant Maj. Grant VanOostrom, VMM-263 sergeant major, and Lt. Col. Paul J. Rock, Jr., VMM-263 commanding officer, salute the national and squadron colors during the activation ceremony March 3.

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Samuel D. White  
correspondent

The future of Marine Corps aviation took a large step forward as hundreds of Marines, Sailors, Airmen, Soldiers and family members gathered to watch a ceremony in which the first operational MV-22 Osprey squadron was activated here March 3.

“Commissioning (Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron-263) is a historic day for the ‘Thunder Chickens,’ for our Corps and for our nation,” said Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Moore, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general. “We have introduced a transformational aircraft into our nation’s forces with the ‘Thunder Chickens.’”

A transformational aircraft because it capitalizes on both the best aspects of the rotary wing and the best aspects of the fixed wing turbo-propeller, Moore explained.

“The (Osprey) is much more survivable than the (CH-46E ‘Sea Knight’) because of it’s range and it’s speed,” said Moore. “It’s a much more capable aircraft and we expect it to perform (excellent) in battle.”

A capable aircraft that has been in the making since the early 1960’s, some feel the delay has produced the best result.

“I have to tell you, waiting for something this good has been worth while,” said Gen. Robert Magnus, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps. “This is a tremendous aircraft. While we are at war, it is a tremendously more survivable

platform for the Marines who are in the fight.”

VMM-263, home to more than 150 Marines and the successor to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-263 which cased its colors in June 2005, will carry on the proud name, “Thunder Chickens,” and also the legacy of the former CH-46E “Sea Knight” squadron.

Honored to carry on the name, “Thunder Chickens,” the Marines of VMM-263 are thrilled by the chance to become the first operational Osprey squadron, said Sgt. Maj. Grant VanOostrom, VMM-263 sergeant major.

“They are very excited because they see it as a culmination of those who have gone before them,” said VanOostrom. “They just happen to be the chosen ones who get to bring it into its current existence; we get to reap the rewards of others.”

And VMM-263 can be expected to reap the almost countless rewards, such as being able to travel at speeds of nearly 300 mph, twice the speed of any current helicopter, have up to five times the range of travel and carry three times the payload.

“The Osprey will allow us to self-deploy these aircraft from New River, or (Air Station) Miramar, across the Atlantic



and Pacific Oceans, to anywhere this great nation wants to plant its flag within two to three days,” said Magnus.

Uncertain of the exact date when the Osprey will be supporting ground forces overseas, the squadron feels assured that it will be in the near future.

“We expect VMM-263 to be deployed within the coming year,” said Moore. “We can’t give an exact date, because we aren’t 100 percent sure.”

“There are two things the American people should know about this aircraft,” said Gen. Michael W. Hagee, 33rd commandant of the Marine Corps, during his visit to Marine Corps Air Station New River Feb. 24. “One, it will change the way we fight; it’s faster, larger, air refuelable and the technology is state of the art. Two, it’s the safest aircraft in our inventory. It’s been tested and proven ready to perform.”

And though tremendous efforts will have to be made by the “Thunder Chickens” before the first Osprey squadron is ready to deploy, a sigh of relief can be breathed by the Marines, families and friends of the program who sacrificed so much to get to where the stand up could be possible, said Moore.

“We are bringing forth the new capability to replace what has been the backbone of Marine aviation in the CH-46,” said Moore. “With that capability, we take rotary wing assault support, now tiltrotor wing assault support, ahead into the future and assure the success of Marines in battle. We are committing the Osprey to the gunfight.”

## Full spectrum of Osprey

### MV-22 (Baseline Design)

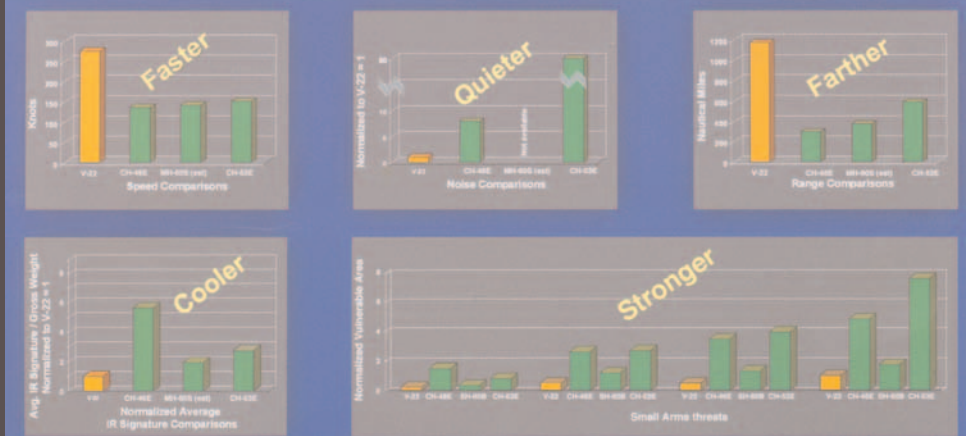
INHERENT FEATURES	MISSION EQUIPMENT	AVIONICS
Composite/aluminum airframe	Single and dual-point external cargo hooks	Dual 1553B data busses
Triple redundant fly-by-wire flight controls	Aerial refueling probe	Dual 64-bit mission computers
Rolls Royce AE1107C engines	12 litters (kit)	NVG compatible, multi-function displays
Shipboard compatible	Advanced cargo handling system	Inertial navigation (3)
Adverse weather capable	Fast rope	Global positioning system
Rear loading ramp	Rescue hoist	VGB/LS/marker beacon
Digital glass cockpit	On-board oxygen generating system	Radar altimeter
6' X 6' X 24' cabin		SATCOM
		Digital color moving map
		FLIR
		Cabin troop commander data interface

### Self-Deployable Worldwide



Saves Time and Frees Strategic Lift Assets

### V-22 Survivability Benefits



All information and graphics courtesy of Bell/Boeing Helicopter public affairs office.



# Veterans restore Vietnam-era workhorse

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Randall A. Clinton  
correspondent

During the early 1960's, when Marines needed transportation to or from combat zones, they didn't call in MV-22's. For the Marines on the frontlines in Vietnam, their savior was the UH-34D, ancestor of the CH-46E and the MV-22.

At the stand-up ceremony for Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron-263, the first operational MV-22 Osprey squadron, Marines from the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-361 Veterans Association displayed a piece of the squadron's past, a static display of a fully restored, operational UH-34D.

The UH-34D was flown by HMM-361 and other Marine squadrons during the Vietnam era. While it wasn't the most beautiful helicopter, it got the job done, bringing Marines back from the front, earning the nickname "Ugly Angel."

As a crew chief on medical evacuation missions in Vietnam, Frank Flag saw firsthand how important the helicopter was.

"You're going in and getting Marines who need medical attention," said Flag. "We could get them to a hospital in 15 minutes."

While he understood the risk of his job, he accepted it.

"You can get a Marine to do stuff that's dangerous, but you can't get them to do things that are boring," said Flag.

The impact of the helicopter and how it helped save the lives of so many Marines compelled the members of the HMM-361 Veterans Association to build a fully operational UH-34D helicopter.

While attending a Vietnam veteran's reunion, Allan Weiss, president of the HMM-361 Veterans Association and a former crew chief, noticed the strong reaction Marines had to seeing Vietnam-era helicopters.

"When I saw almost every former Marine there crying, I knew this was the one to restore for our guys," said Weiss.

The reaction spurred a project that has taken five years to complete, with an approximate \$350,000 price tag, according to [www.34restoration.org](http://www.34restoration.org).

More than 50 corporate sponsors, including the Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and American Legions have aided the restoration of the UH-34D.



Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Moore meets with members of HMM-361 Veterans Association and builders of the fully-operational UH-34D helicopter. The Vietnam-era helicopter caught the attention of Marines young and old at the stand-up ceremony for VMM-263 March 3.

From a pile of scrap in a Cochise, Ariz., junkyard to a fully-operational, fully-restored piece of Vietnam history, the project was finished Nov. 13, 2005, said Weiss.

Ron Hatton, an HMM-361 crew chief who spent 14 years with the UH-34D, had his doubts when he first saw the frame sitting in a desert lot four and a half years ago.

"I turned my back to the aircraft and said, 'Oh my God, what have we gotten ourselves into,'" said Hatton. "Now the helicopter is a dream come true."

Larry Turner, a former HMM-362 pilot with 18,000 hours of flying experience, flew the first flight of the fully restored UH-34D.

Weiss never flew a UH-34D during his time in Vietnam, but almost a half century later, he was proud to ride in the helicopter.

"Everybody was in tears," said Weiss. "It was a very emotional day after years of rebuilding it."

The members of the HMM-361 Veterans Association flew their "Ugly Angel" to New River March 2, marking the longest flight of the recently restored helicopter.

Flying in the UH-34D still thrills George DeBarge, an HMM-162 crew chief.

"To see this thing fly after 41 years, its amazing," he said.

Berine Savoir, a Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron-263 crew chief, didn't need to see the helicopter fly to feel the excitement.

"When I heard it start for the first time in 40 years, chills ran up and down my spine," he said.

"Honey, we're home," screamed John Conner as the UH-34D descended onto the flightline. Conner, a HMM-162 crew chief, returned to the home of his former squadron in the aircraft he rode out of Vietnam.

During Conner's return flight from Vietnam, he drew his knife and carved the date into the interior of the helicopter, said Conner.

When he joined the project almost two years ago, he heard Weiss talking about an engraving next to the crew chief seat, and with

that, he knew this was his UH-34D.

"Out of the hundreds of helicopters they looked at, what are the chances something like that could happen; it's incredible," he said.

The stand-up ceremony for VMM-263 was the first exhibition of the finished aircraft.

The Marines plan to take their "Ugly Angel" around the country to teach about their savior in the sky, while paying tribute to their fallen warriors. The crew travels with a sign, representing the Marines who perished from the squadron in Vietnam.

Flag said he sees the restoration project as a link to his grandchildren.

"I'm thinking of my two grandchildren in Texas. They can go into a museum someday and say, 'That's grandpa's helicopter,'" said Flag.

The HMM-361 Veterans Association relies on donations to support its mission of traveling the country to display its fully operational UH-34D helicopter and can be contacted at (631)-827-5526. Donations should be sent to the Marine Helicopter Squadron-361 Veterans Association, P.O. Box 429, Cutchogue, NY 11935.

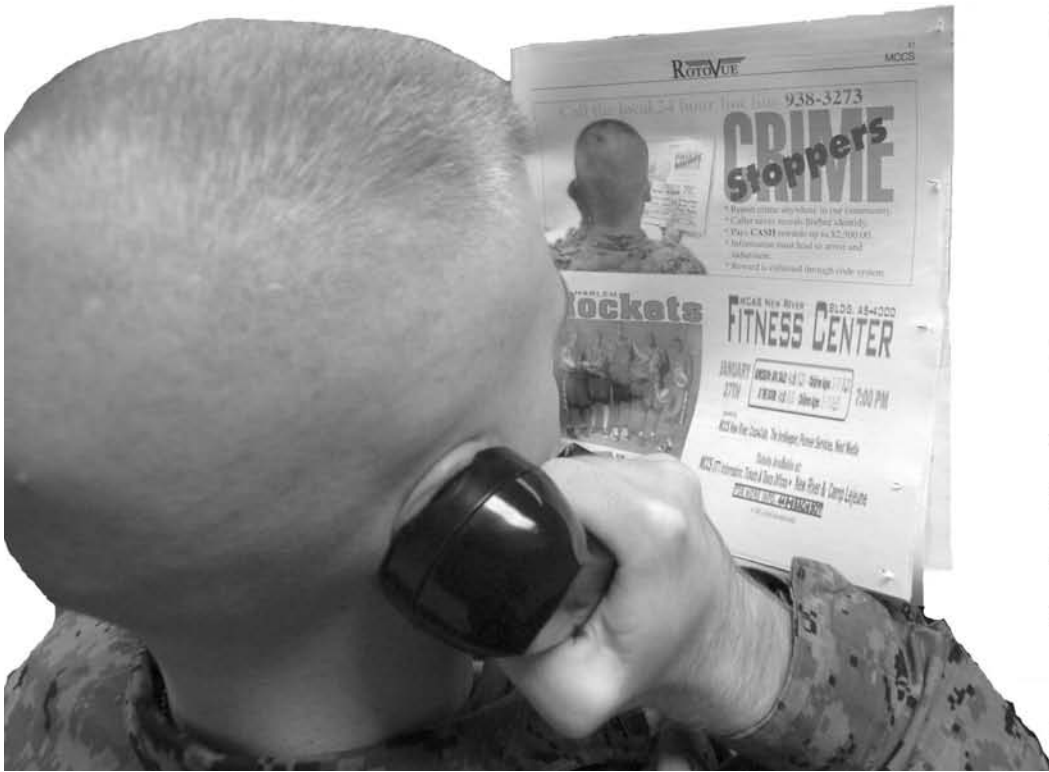


The UH-34D is completely restored down to the smallest detail.



Old School! A UH-34D "Ugly Angel" takes off from the New River flightline.

Call the local 24 hour hot line 938-3273



# CRIME Stoppers

- \* Report crime anywhere in our community.
- \* Caller never reveals his/her identity.
- \* Pays **CASH** rewards up to \$2,500.00.
- \* Information must lead to arrest and indictment.
- \* Reward is collected through code system.

## Semper Fitness

### Return to Readiness

Mona Silva  
MCCS RTR trainer

Are you injured? Do you feel like you are 100 percent after being treated for an injury? Perhaps the Return to Readiness Program is right for you.

The Return to Readiness Program (RTR) has been described as the "best kept secret" among all programs offered by the Marine Corps Air Station Fitness Division. This program is designed for military members who are on light or limited duty and also military members who have been treated for injury, but still don't feel like they have completely recovered.

Dr. Ben Kibler states, "The absence of symptoms does not mean normal function."

The good news is RTR can assist you in achieving 100 percent capabilities on account that it bridges the gap between recovering from injury to physical fitness.

Why is it effective? Because RTR addresses not just the injury, but all five components of fitness such as cardiovascular, body composition, muscle endurance, muscle strength and flexibility as well as functional training. This program assists injured military members in achieving excellent fitness levels to perform their duties with 100 percent proficiency.

According to Functional Rehabilitation of Sports and Musculoskeletal Injuries, muscle strength may decrease up to 17 percent within the initial 72 hours of immobilization. Cardiovascular fitness can decrease rapidly with inactivity. Maximum volume of oxygen utilization (VO2 max) decreases by up to 25 percent after three weeks of bed rest. The positive effects of a seven week endurance training program are almost completely lost within the first two weeks.

In reality, it would be extremely difficult for an injured Marine to perform 100 percent of his duties by virtue of Marine Corps Order P6100.12.

According to the order, "The Marine Corps considers physical fitness to be the ability of a Marine to meet the physical demands of any combat or duty situation without due fatigue."

The facts are out - use the right program.

Those looking to further their fitness accomplishments or simply need some extra workout ideas, are encouraged to remember that the Personal Training aboard Marine Corps Air Station New River is a free service to all active duty personnel, their spouses and dependents (be aware of age limits in facilities).

Trainers all hold different hours at each facility to better accommodate individual needs. Please feel free to call building AS-4000 at 449-5854 or AS-204 at 449-5267 and make an appointment.

# MCAS Pistons capture perfect season

Story and photos by  
Lance Cpl. Samuel D. White  
correspondent

No, they aren't the 1992 "Dream Team." They don't have Larry Bird, Magic Johnson, Charles Barkley or Michael Jordan and they certainly don't have the ability to do behind-the-back, foul line slam dunks.

So what makes these two very different teams so very similar? A drive and passion for the game of basketball that not only the players feel, but the spectators feel from watching these young men pour their heart into every shot, lay-up and free-throw.

Oh, and not to mention an undefeated record and a dominance over teams that hasn't been seen since the days of M.C. Hammer.

Retired Marine John Mackrell and Staff Sgt. Ryan A. Swan, coaches of the Marine Corps Air Station New River "Pistons," have taken their team back to practicing the long forgotten fundamentals of basketball and with that, an undefeated record of 5-0 and a number one seat in the playoffs.

"This is a big accomplishment for the players because it shows them that no matter what the odds are, you can achieve anything you set your mind to," said Swan, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune communications battalion information assurance chief and "Pistons" assistant coach. "It is a major accomplishment for New River Air Station because up until about five or six years ago, there wasn't even a youth sports league on the Air Station for any sport."

Once the New River sports teams were established, other bases would look at the Station as, "an easy win," said head coach John Mackrell.

With motivating fuel to prove the other teams wrong and nine hungry 14-year-olds, Mackrell and Swan were equipped with the essentials to have a winning team and they pushed their players to their limits, constantly practicing drills and running laps around the gymna-



Front row from left to right: Adam Roberts, Damian Coker-Swan, Jarrett Rogers, Mike Bowdry. Back row: John Mackrell, John Mackrell, Jr., Kurstan Childs, Robert Harding, Pierre Davis, Ryan Swan.

sium.

"I don't believe there are any easy wins in any sport, just different challenges that teams have to face from game to game," said Swan. "I do believe that the Air Station Youth Sports teams will be taken a little more seriously in the coming seasons."

And outside forces will take the "Pistons" a little more serious as they are the number one contender during the 2006 playoff season.

"We have been successful because we've worked well as a team; if you don't work together, you won't accomplish anything," said John Mackrell, Jr., "Pistons" guard. "During the playoffs, we will continue to do well if we continue to work together."

So, with motivation similar to the "Dream Team," a lot can be expected from the "Pistons" team as they work their way to the "gold."

"The team worked extremely hard to get where they are today," said Swan. "They are a great group of young men and every one of them has the potential to go the distance if they stay focused."



Harding, "Pistons" center, drives to the hoop.

## Youth Baseball Registration

The Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department is holding youth baseball registration between March 8 and 24 for ages five to 15. For more information contact Melody Strickland at 938-2538.

## Women's Basketball

Women interested in applying for the 2006 Marine Corps Women's Basketball Trial Camp should contact the Marine Corps Community Services athletic director at 449-5609 or 449-6410.

## Girls Fast-Pitch Softball

Females, ages seven to 16, interested in playing fast-pitch softball should register between now and March 24. For more information contact the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department at 938-2538.

# HMM-365 (Reinforced) perfects night vision capabilities

**Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Cosola**  
24th Marine Expeditionary Unit

NAVAL AIR STATION OCEANA, Va. -- They exercise the ultimate advantage of being both invisible and seeing the unseen. Skimming across rooftops while scanning for danger, these superheroes are on call 24 hours day and ready to fight terrorism wherever it may lurk.

But this crew is no Justice League; they aren't Spiderman and they don't need the Dark Knight's bat symbol to know when to fight. They're the "Blue Knights" of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-365 (Reinforced) and they're "second to none" when it comes to working night operations with image intensifying gear.

Flying in the Norfolk, Va., area as the Air Combat Element of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit during its Training in an Urban Environment Exercise, HMM-365 (Rein.), is constantly perfecting its skill with night vision goggles during low-light operations.

"There are no lights on the helicopter," said Lance Cpl. Chris W. Colbath, HMM-365 (Rein.) crew chief. "Nothing can see us, but we can see everything -- it's an awesome feeling."

The alien sensation of operating a helicopter in the blackness of night is "a lot like looking through a toilet paper tube," added Capt. Rich P. Ayers, HMM-365 (Rein.) aviation safety officer and CH-46E "Sea Knight" pilot. "You have to scan the horizon a lot more and look around because you lose a lot of your depth perception."

Losing that depth perception -- from 180 degrees down to 40 -- increases the need for the entire crew to work together, said Ayers.

"Flying night operations is a total crew effort," explained Ayers. "The crew chiefs are the ones calling you down to the deck,

because we can't see.

Landing in an urban environment means that you'll be landing in some tight zones and crew chiefs will save you more times than you can count."

"The goggles drop the field of view and the nose comes up high," added Sgt. Jared E. Daly, HMM-365 (Rein.) crew chief. "The pilots lose all perception. We're actually looking to see where the ground is and see that it's clear and avoid any holes."

The midnight ballet performed by helicopter crews is made more difficult by NVG fatigue, a condition that occurs due to the strenuous scanning of the horizon, said Capt. Randall T. Schindler, HMM-365 (Rein.) CH-46E "Sea Knight" pilot.

"When you're actually flying, not only are you looking through the goggles, but you're also looking down without them at the gauges then back through the NVG's," said Schindler. "A lot of people don't know about the fatigue the goggles cause. Because you have to scan so much it wears you out faster. After the first time you wear the goggles you're really worn out after the flight."

In addition to fatigue, ambient and cultural lighting can play havoc on the goggles, hampering the NVG's capabilities, said Ayers.



Lance Cpl. Jeffrey A. Cosola

Corporal Jacob I. Parks, HMM-365 (Rein.) crew chief, scans the horizon during a night flight on Feb. 27. HMM-365 is the ACE of the 24th MEU and is taking part in the MEU's Training in an Urban Environment Exercise.

"In an urban environment, like the Norfolk area, there's a lot of ambient and cultural light that tends to bloom out the goggles," said Ayers. "Flying in an urban area when that's happening makes it hard to pick out details like landing zones and lights for navigation."

That situation can be even more hair-raising in a combat environment like Iraq, where a dust cloud or an unidentified person stand-

ing outside a building can increase the threat to the crew, said Schindler.

"Over in Iraq you could fly into a dust cloud and the dust would create a sparkle effect in the goggles and you can lose your references," said Schindler. "You depend on the crew chiefs to see the ground. It's like having four pilots on the plane."

"In Iraq you have a different mindset, you're mind is doing different things," added Cpl. John R. Miller, HMM-365 (Rein.) crew chief. "When you see someone outside their house here, in reality, it's no big deal, but over there, it's a lot more exciting. Anything and everything you do is amplified 10 fold during night operations."

For the Marines of HMM-365 (Rein.), night operations don't require the crew to wear capes. They don't have to be mutants and they don't have to run faster than a speeding bullet. However, they do have the ability to fly and they do use their X-Ray vision to own the night and keep evil on its toes and Americans safe - whether it's training stateside or fighting terrorists abroad.

Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-365 (Reinforced) is scheduled to deploy this spring to the European and Central Command theaters of operations as the air combat element of the 24th MEU, which is composed of its Command Element; Battalion Landing Team 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment; and MEU Service Support Group 24.



## This month in Marine Corps history



Marines  
fight in  
first  
amphibious  
raid in New  
Providence,  
Bahamas.



In March  
1955,  
after five  
years of fight-  
ing, the last ground  
forces were with-  
drawn from Korea.  
More than 25,000  
Marines were killed  
or wounded.



March 13,  
1945, the  
1st and 3rd  
Battalions of  
the 9th Marine  
Regiment attacked  
through  
"Crushman's  
Pocket," Iwo Jima.  
This was the last  
strongpoint of  
enemy resistance  
on the island.  
Three days later,  
on the 16th, Iwo  
Jima was secured.



Marines  
seized  
and  
destroyed  
illicit distilleries in  
"Irishtown"  
Brooklyn, New  
York on March 28,  
1870.

# We must ask ourselves, ‘God, what now?’



**Cmdr. Frederick Hilder**  
MAG-29 chaplain

Just when we think the bumps in the road of life are beginning to level out somewhat, and we are getting things under control, out of nowhere emerges a huge pothole, and we hit it, sending us out of what had been a fairly comfortable, at least predictable, existence.

Or some have been certain that their lives could not possibly get any more hectic or overloaded, when here comes the devastating report that something tragic has happened to two of our helicopters near Djibouti.

As bad as the shock was for those of us in uniform and our own families, we can only imagine what each of you have had to endure as the dear loved ones of those eight Marines and two Airmen.

You could each tell a heart-wrenching story of the intense reactions you have had since receiving the news – not only was there shock, but disbelief that this could have happened, and then the deep sorrow, and even the anger over having to give up someone so important to you. Or maybe better said, someone taken from you in the midst of their young lives.

Then, along with those reactions, those powerful feelings, are the questions. Many

questions... and many still unanswered.

I used to think I had fairly reasonable responses to that one question which always surfaces, “God, why?” I could in an instant tell someone confidently that we really do not understand all of what happens in His creation, but God most certainly has a will for your life. Now though I still fully and completely believe that, I have a further take on it. As I have seen deadly and sad results of serious illnesses, vehicle and recreational accidents, training mishaps, and combat, and have sat and prayed and oftentimes wept with families - parents, spouses, children, and siblings - the question “God, why?” is always lingering. But the question is easier asked than answered, and maybe the answer is not to be known, so I have learned to ask instead, “God, what now?” How do I navigate the minefield of anger and resentment and fear and emptiness and heartache?

Three Bible passages were read this morning and within just these three are many ways God intends for us to use faith to survive and even grow stronger and more faithful from the earthly crises which befall us.

Here is just a sampling of encouragement we find in Psalm 23: The Lord is my Shepherd (He loves, cares for, and protects me), He restores my soul, I will not fear, for He is with me.

In Isaiah 40: The Lord understands and gives power to the weak (who hasn’t felt some weakness lately?). He increases

strength, says the Bible, we shall mount up with wings like eagles, and if we wait on the Lord he will renew our strength.

And then that magnificent New Testament book of Romans. There is more encouragement in the five verses read this morning from Chapter 12 than I possibly have time to expound upon today. But reduced down, here the Word of God says to us: rejoice in hope, be patient in your tribulation, continue in prayer, cling to what is good, and look out for one another with brotherly love.

“God, why?” But also, “God, what now?” Faith in the Almighty is an important part of the Marine Corps legacy, as well as the free choice of whether to believe or not. And faith was important to those we honor here today. Some trusted in Jesus Christ in a personal, serious, intentional way, such that their lives reflected it. Some expressed their awe of God in other ways, even through the many slogans that describe the uniqueness of being a Marine. Such as, “The impossible is done with the Lord’s help and a few good men and women.” Or, “Marines pull duty in Heaven, who else would God trust?”

This sense of pride in the Corps and respect for God surrounded these eight Marines. Sure, they would have complained about the chow...it’s a ritual. And the long working hours, and even about some of their co-workers, especially their seniors, but Marines they were – with the pride seen in

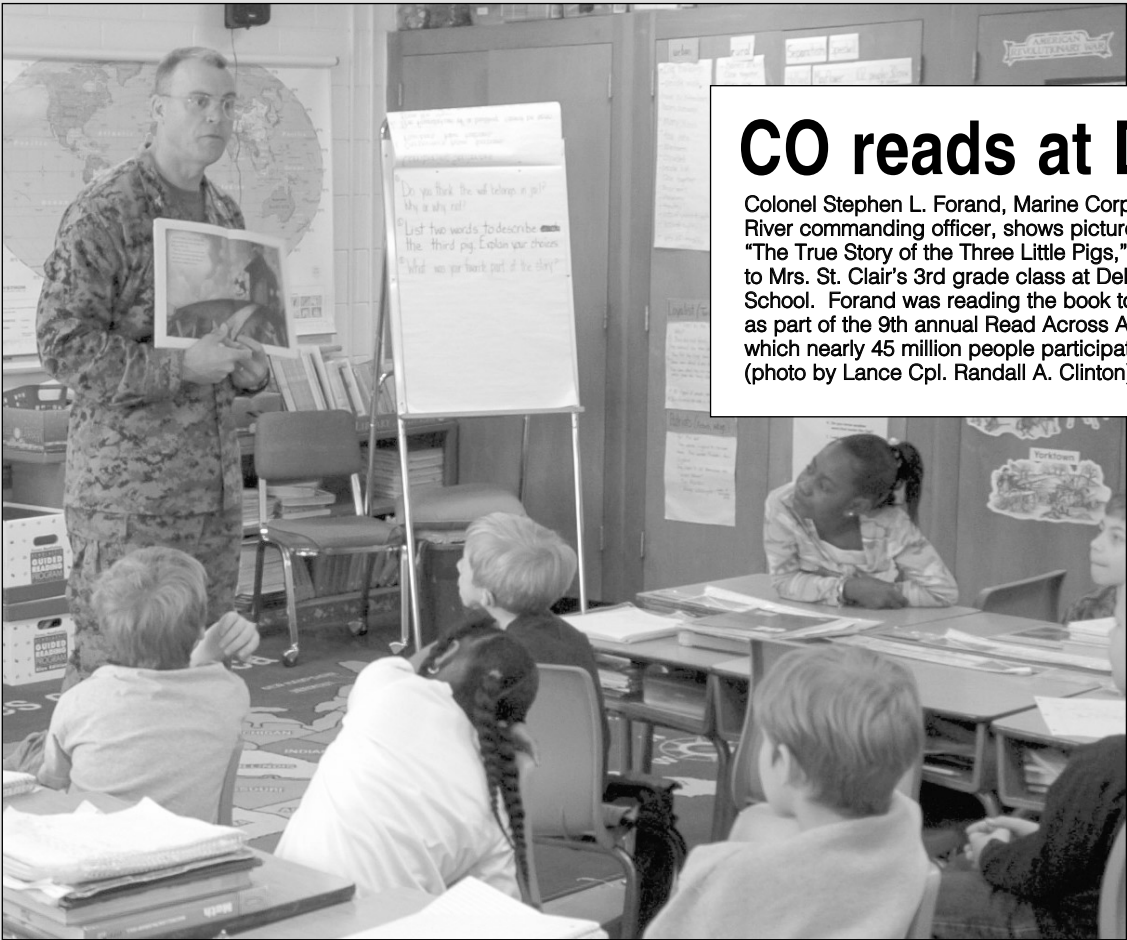
these other sayings: “I fight for freedom, I don’t ask for much more, my God, my Family, my Country, my Corps.” And, “When in doubt, empty the magazine...” Well, let’s go to another one: “For those who fought for it, freedom has a flavor the protected will never know.”

One final quote, from retired Marine Tom Bartlett, the late managing editor of Leatherneck Magazine: “You earned the title ‘Marine’ upon graduation from boot recruit training. It wasn’t willed to you; it isn’t a gift. It is not a government subsidy. Few can claim the title; no one can take it away. It is yours forever.”

Brandon, Jimmy, Sam, Donnie, Matt, Eric, Nick, Bryan

You earned the title “Marine.” No one, no circumstance, not death itself can take it away from you. It is yours forever. And to all of us still asking “God, what now?” Remember what we learned from Romans 12 – rejoice in hope, be patient in your tribulation, continue in prayer, cling to what is good, and look out for one another with brotherly love. And... be grateful... for those who survived and those who continue to serve our country faithfully.

*Editor’s Note: This message was delivered at the Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-464 memorial service on Feb. 28, 2006, at the Station Memorial Chapel, Marine Corps Air Station New River, Jacksonville, N.C.*



## CO reads at Delalio

Colonel Stephen L. Forand, Marine Corps Air Station New River commanding officer, shows pictures from the book, “The True Story of the Three Little Pigs,” by Jon Scieszka, to Mrs. St. Clair’s 3rd grade class at Delalio Elementary School. Forand was reading the book to the class March 1 as part of the 9th annual Read Across America Day in which nearly 45 million people participated nationwide. (photo by Lance Cpl. Randall A. Clinton)

## Sunday Services

**Catholic**  
9 a.m.

**Protestant**  
11 a.m.

For more information  
call the Memorial  
Chapel at 449-6801.



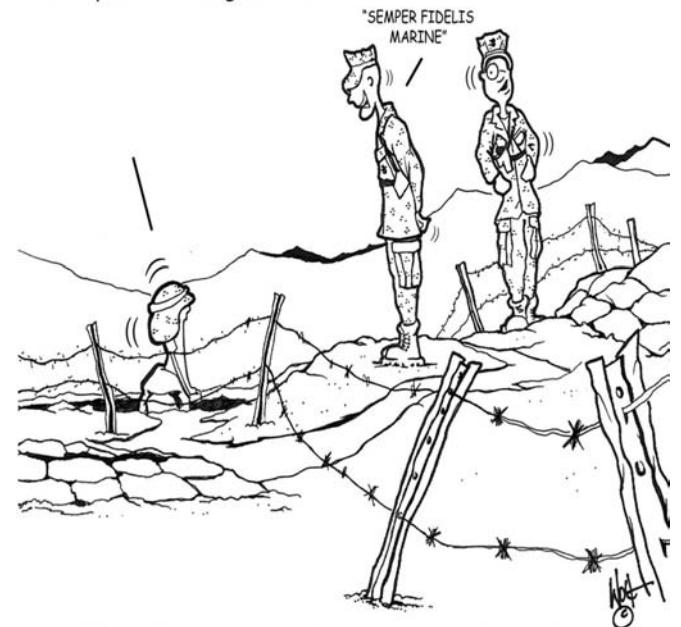


## King Cake for cash

The King Cake is presented to the crowd at the annual Staff Noncommissioned Officers' Wives Club Mardi Gras party, held at the SNCO Club Feb. 24. The party is the year's largest fundraiser for the SNCO Dependent Scholarship Fund. The party also included dancing and prizes. (photo by Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Gale)

## Sempertoons by Gunnery Sgt. Charles Wolf

"...MORE @#%\$ AMMO.., A LITTLE &\*%\$ SUN BLOCK,..  
A HOT #@%\$ MEAL EVERY ONCE AND AWHILE...  
AND MOST IMPORTANTLY.....MORE !@#%\$ MAIL.....  
Other than that,..... I am proud to serve my Corps and Country,  
Thank you for asking..... SIR!"



• When Marines are allowed to speak Freely •

## WANTED

For immediate adoption



"Chocolate Lab"

ID: 102764

To adopt this dog or for more  
information on how you can help  
save his friends  
call Onslow County Animal Control  
at (910) 455-0182

## Station Theater Movies

### March 8 - March 22

Wed. March 8	9 a.m.	Rumor Has It	PG-13
	7 p.m.	Munich	R
Fri. March 10	7 p.m.	Glory Road	PG-13
	9:30 p.m.	The Ringer	PG-13
Sat. March 11	7 p.m.	Glory Road	PG-13
	9:30 p.m.	The Ringer	PG-13
Sun. March 12	3 p.m.	Munich	R
	6 p.m.	Glory Road	PG-13
Mon. March 13	7 p.m.	Casanova	R
Wed. March 15	9 a.m.	Last Holiday	PG-13
	7 p.m.	Last Holiday	PG-13
Fri. March 17	7 p.m.	Last Holiday	PG-13
	9:30 p.m.	Munich	R
Sat. March 18	7 p.m.	Last Holiday	PG-13
	9:30 p.m.	Casanova	R
Sun. March 19	3 p.m.	Tristan & Isolde	PG-13
	6 p.m.	Casanova	R
Mon. March 20	7 p.m.	Tristan & Isolde	PG-13
Wed. March 22	9 a.m.	Big Momma's House 2	PG-13
	7 p.m.	Big Momma's House 2	PG-13



The theater snack bar opens 30 minutes before the first movie and closes 45 minutes after the last movie begins. Movies and times are subject to change.

For more information, call the Station Theater at 449-6292 or 449-6528.



A \$1 admission fee is charged for ages seven and above.